



Bristol Scrutiny 2017/18

Scoping of Scrutiny Topics

Title

'Tackling Increasing Demand for Social Services – Children'

1.Reasons for Undertaking this Work

Main reasons for undertaking the piece of work (and any Background information if relevant)

Main reasons for undertaking work:

- Budget pressure - impending cuts £250k to family support budget
- Increasing need and increased costs for procurement/provision
- Poor national market for commissioning services
- Evidence of increasing national trends and significant upturn in children going into care and child protection plans
- Correlation between smaller caseloads and the ability to make a difference to families
- Concern that early help and early intervention pathways may not be delivering targeted early help offer that people understand to prevent recourse to social care services
- Higher than national average re-referral rates 25/26% suggests work not creating sustainable help to families
- New Ofsted framework expected from 2018, thematic inspections could include SEND and joint targeting area of neglect

Background Information:

- The Mayor's Vision
- Strategic Plan
- Previous Scrutiny

Key question that you are seeking to answer

Is our wider children's service early help offer well enough understood and used to meet the need of children and families before it reaches the early help, targeted intervention and children in care thresholds?

Main objectives/main areas of investigation

Main objectives:

To understand whether our wider children's service early help offer is well enough understood and whether it is being used to meet the needs of children and families before it reaches the early help, targeted intervention and children in care thresholds.

Main areas of investigation:

- 1. To understand and define 'increasing demand' in the context of statutory Social Services for Children and children in care thresholds**
 - A review of the data and evidence of children/families affected and resources available to support those services
 - To review and understand children in care thresholds
- 2. To scrutinise the wider children's services early help offer**
 - To define the range of services, including work with partners within the wider children's services early help offer (pathway)
 - How systems (including information technology) work together to support this work
- 3. To scrutinise whether the early help offer is well enough understood?**
 - Do partners and families understand the early help offer (pathway)?
- 4. To scrutinise whether the early help offer is used to meet the need of children and families before it reaches the early help, targeted intervention and children in care thresholds**
 - How is partnership working executed within the early help pathway?
 - What is working well and not so well?
 - Is the quality and quantity of early help services right in the right places?
 - Are our early intervention services working to keep children out of care?

Draft Terms of Reference and possible outcomes

Terms of Reference:

Tbc

Possible Outcomes:

- a. A clear definition of increasing demand in the context of statutory social services for children
- b. A map/audit of children's early help provision in Bristol including partners which affect the pathway to Children's Care services
- c. A coherent early help and targeted prevention offer across our

- partnerships that people understand
- d. Recommendations to improve the early help offer and ensure that it is used to meet the need of children and families before it reaches the early help, targeted intervention and children in care thresholds

2.Member Involvement

Members involved	Cllr Kirk, Cllr Massey
Key Executive Member	Cllr Godwin, Children and Young People
Other Executive Member Portfolios covered, if any	<p>Cllr Holland, Adult Social Care (ref: budget pressures and interlocking social care services)</p> <p>Cllr Hiscott, Education and Skills (ref: Children Centres as Early Help and Council Assets)</p> <p>Cllr Cheney Deputy Mayor – Finance, Governance and Performance (ref: Strategic Commissioning children's services)</p> <p>Cllr Smith, Housing (ref: local accommodation for children in care)</p>

3.Officer Support

Lead Directorate Officer(s)	Jacqui Jenson - Service Director Care & Support, Children & Families
Policy Advisor	Louise deCordova

List of possible internal and external witnesses/contributors and key information required	<p>Key Partners and Stakeholders:</p> <p>Bristol City Council Staff Early Help Teams etc.</p> <p>Troubled Families and Think Family</p> <p>Voluntary Sector Partners</p> <p>Health Providers</p> <p>Service users</p> <p>Equality Groups</p> <p>Data:</p> <p>Severity of Increased Need Chart</p> <p>Statistical Neighbours</p> <p>Budget information</p>
--	---

Future LGIU Briefings:

- The potential for developing the capacity and diversity of children's social care services in England
- SEND inspection outcome letters – Part 1
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Peer Support and Children and Young People's Mental Health
- Prospects for Education, Early Years, Children's Care Services and Further Education and Skills

Time Frame

Suggested	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggested methodology is task and finish group (non-public meetings).• No specific deadline as budget pressure is ongoing and persistent.• Start dates and number of sessions to be negotiated and timetabled.

Decision-making/path
for recommendations:

Recommendations from investigation to be agreed and adopted by OSM Board (date tbc)
Recommendations to Executive (Mayor/Cabinet) (date tbc)
Depending on nature of recommendations may need to go to FC (date tbc)

Costs

Specific costs identified

None at present

Date: July 2017